

Foster Care Review Board Utilization/Activity Report For the Month of June 2011

Important Considerations: The number of reviews conducted each month may be impacted by the following: 1) not filling a review specialist vacancy in anticipation of budget cuts in 2011, 2) challenges created by the implementation of the child welfare reform, 3) holidays, 4) staff vacations, and 5) prior budget/staff cuts.

Current Month Statistics

	Reviews in Current Month	Goal for Current Month*	Percent of Monthly Goal Reviewed*	Reviews Year to Date	Goal for Year to Date*	Percent of YTD Review Goal Completed*
Children reviewed	359	350*	103%*	2,383	2,170	110%

*The goal is based on current staffing levels. Since the economic downturn began the FCRB has lost 1 supervisor position, 3 support staff positions, and 5 review specialist positions, thus the FCRB is unable to review all children. A plan is being developed to potentially conduct more reviews; however, due to continuing documentation issues, this likely will not be implemented until the second half of the year at the earliest.

Additional information on children reviewed this month:

IV-E Children Reviewed	146 (41%)	Children age birth-five	129 (36%)
Non IV-E Children Reviewed	213 (59%)	Children age six to 18	230 (64%)

Point in Time Statistics

Total children in out-of-home care on June 27, 2011 4,235 children
Children who had been in out-of-home care 6 months or longer 2,871 children

Subtotals of those in care 6 months or longer→	Reviewed in the last 6 months	1,843	(64%)
	Reviewed, but not in last 6 months	557	(19%)
	Not reviewed	471	(16%)

Facts regarding the 471 children above:

Age breakdown: 52 children are age 0-5, 55 children are age 6-12, 364 children are age 13-18.

DHHS office/area:

3 are from Beatrice	12 are from Grand Island	15 are from North Platte
2 are from Blair	6 are from Hastings	221 are from Omaha
4 are from Broken Bow	17 are from Kearney	25 are from Papillion
0 are from Center, Nebraska	4 are from Lexington	1 is from Pender
16 are from Columbus	102 are from Lincoln	2 are from Pierce
11 are from Dakota City	12 are from McCook	5 are from York
4 are from Fremont	0 are from Nebraska City	
6 are from Gering	3 are from Norfolk	

IV-E Status: 10 are IV-E eligible, 461 are not eligible. The 10 IV-E Eligible children include: 1 from Beatrice, 3 from Lincoln, and 6 from Omaha. These IV-E eligible children were assigned for review in July.

Work with State Board Chair and Committees

The Director met with the Executive Committee on June 13th, with the Annual Report Committee on June 20, and the Fiscal Committee on June 27th.

Summary of Director's Meetings (additional information was/will be provided in Director's updates)

Work with Senators: During June, the Executive Director met with Senator Campbell, Chair of Health and Human Services, and Senator Harms of the Performance Audit Committee. A Data Orientation was held for Senators on June 9th four Senators, Liz Hruska, one senator's staff person, and Martha Carter from the Performance Audit Committee attended the orientation.

Work with the Chief Justice: The Director met with the Chief Justice on area issues regarding the courts.

Judicial Informational Meetings: The Director continues to serve on the Supreme Court's committee on GAL issues, which met to review proposed GAL standards.

DHHS and Lead Agency Meetings. The Executive Director, the Program Coordinator, and the Lincoln area Review Specialist Supervisor attended the Youth Summit on June 22nd.

The Director continues to serve on the Partner's Council, a group put together by DHHS to collaborate on pertinent issues. The Director was named Chair of the Council's Rural Task Force.

Casey Foundation. The Executive Director and Administrative Coordinator were part of a conference call on June 16th which focused on ways Nebraska could qualify for more federal IV-E funds.

Management meetings. The Executive Director continued to meet with the individual members of the FCRB management team (coordinators and supervisors).

Work to Ensure Children's Safety (additional information was/will be in Director's updates)

Court attended. Staff attended court on 31 cases involving 51 children during June. The Board's recommendations were introduced in 16 cases where the recommendation had not been previously introduced into the record.* In 27 cases issues identified by the board were addressed by the courts.

*There is a difference in judicial interpretation of whether the court can accept the Board's recommendation report on its own motion. Once a court has established how reviews are conducted and has established staff professional expertise (often through having our staff present in court), courts generally accept the recommendations report without an attorney introducing the report into the evidence.

Joint staffings with DHHS and/or lead agencies. Staff and/or supervisors staffed 41 individual children's cases involving serious issues with DHHS and/or Lead agencies in June.

Additional calls, emails, letters, meetings. During June the review specialists and/or their supervisor made 102 extra contacts to ensure that issues identified on a child's case were addressed. This consisted of additional calls, emails, letters, and/or meetings.

Facility or foster home visits. There were 2 foster home visits for 5 children in June, and 3 facility tours.

Team meetings. 12 cases were brought to an 1184 team meeting in June. During June the Review Specialists attended 6 family group conference/team meetings to discuss case issues on behalf of children.

Work in Western Nebraska. The Executive Director met with Dave Schroeder on June 28th to develop the agenda for the Activity Committee. On June 30th the Director met with the Scottsbluff area review specialist, and staffed a case of serious concern with that reviewer, the County Attorney, DHHS Senior Administration, and DDHS Staff. July 1st the Director met with

a local board member who will be testifying in court on behalf of the local board and review specialist. The Director, review specialist, and board member met with Judge Worden, who provided training to the local board member. Judge Worden expressed concerns regarding delays in receiving pre-trial assessments, issues with visitation services and documentation regarding what occurred during visitation, and voluntary cases. The Director met with a local board member who is resigning due to health issues. The Director then met with the NFAPA representative who described the same issues that Judge Worden had identified as problematic.

Summary of Staff Collaborative Efforts (additional information was/will be in Director's updates)

Through the Eyes Meetings: In June, Supervisors and/or Review Specialists attended 5 meetings of a Through the Eyes of a Child collaborative team.

Continued work with Lead Agency Quality Control Personnel. Procedures continued to be utilized for reporting back to the lead agencies when there is a lack of documentation in the physical or computer records for children's cases.

Special Requests Received

Six special requests were received on 7 children during June. Reasons for the requests for review or assistance included safety concerns and service delivery issues, and requests for contact information.

Cases Internally Flagged for Action

As part of the data entry process, four cases involving four children were flagged for special action during June, such as scheduling for review early. Issues included extreme abuse, neglect, or trauma experienced, abandonment, number of placements and times in care, and placement issues.

Statistics Requests

During June there was one request for statistics other than those in the annual report, not including persons using the website to obtain statistics. This was the request for the annual data on several topics, such as number in care, reasons for entering care, etc., contributed to the Kids Count fact book.

Administration and Support

The Data Coordinator attended a meeting of the Department of Education's Special Committee on Out of Home Care on June 14th. The Data Coordinator attended a meeting of the Partner's Council Data Group on June 2nd. The Data Coordinator also continued to provide statistics and lists from the tracking system for staff and non-staff usage. The Data Coordinator met with a representative of the Ombudsman's office, which is assisting with the LR 37 performance audit of the child welfare system, on June 27th. The Data Coordinator attended the LR 37 hearing on June 23rd, and participated in the National Foster Care Review Coalition conference call on June 28th.

The Administrative Coordinator assured materials were ready for the June 15th Omaha training, and the June 23rd Grand Island training and attended these trainings to assure the check in of participants went smoothly, that receipts were filled out accurately, and equipment needs for presenters were met. The Administrative Coordinator prepared specialized presentation documents for the June 9th Data Orientation and the June 27th meeting of the State Board's Fiscal Committee.

The Administrative Coordinator and Administrative Staff continued to track children and their outcomes, process notifications and recommendations, and assure payroll and accounts payable were processed. The Administrative Coordinator continued to supervise these processes.

The Program Coordinator continued to supervise and assist the Review Specialist Supervisors.

The Program Coordinator continued to compile data on meetings and court attendance from review specialists' and supervisors' work documents. These statistics are used starting on page two of the monthly activity reports. The Program Coordinator also continued to provide some of the narratives for the activity report.

The Program Coordinator continued to enter the Lack of Documentation data for the monthly reports, and to compile the data to create the 11 different Lack of Documentation Reports that are distributed to DHHS and Lead Agency administration. Reports are shared with the State Board.

Case assignment. 105 DHHS and Lead Agency staff were noticed that FCRB staff would be reviewing cases in 13 local area offices across the state in June. (The Omaha case assignment letter is sent to 24 different persons.) These letters include the date of the file review, the cases to be reviewed, and the Review Specialist's name and contact information. These letters are e-mailed only.

Notifications sent. Notifications for 37 board meetings were received from Review Specialists at least 12 days from the local board meeting date per policy and were sent out by the FCRB Processing staff on average within .54 days of receiving them.

Recommendations sent. Recommendations were sent to legal parties from 37 board meetings. All the recommendations were sent within 30 days from the local board meeting per statute, support staff sent recommendations out of the office by the FCRB Processing staff within 1.05 days of receiving recommendations. Staff faxed out 50 cases to meet court.

Trainings

On-going trainings for local board members took place June 15th in Omaha, and June 23rd in Grand Island.

Personnel

Two staff members had an anniversary date in June.

There had been a vacancy since late last year that had not been filled as there was the possibility of further budget cuts, necessitating further staff cuts. During the 2011 Legislative Session, which ended in May, the Legislature determined that the FCRB should not take further funding cuts. Therefore, steps were taken in June to begin filling that vacancy.

One review specialist announced in June that she would be leaving at the end of July as her husband obtained an advanced degree and accepted a position in another state. This position was advertised as well.